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Using Podcasts As English Learning Media to Improve Student Listening Skills

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Abstract

This study investigates the urgency of finding innovative and effective methods to improve students' listening skills in English, a critical component of language learning often hindered by a lack of engaging resources. The research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of audio podcasts in addressing this challenge and enhancing students' listening comprehension. A quasi-experimental design was employed, involving 25 students who participated in a pretest-posttest framework. The intervention included regular exposure to audio podcasts specifically designed to improve listening skills. Data were collected through pretest and posttest scores, along with an analysis of student feedback. The results revealed a significant improvement in students' listening abilities, with the average posttest score increasing from 51.76 to 63.63. Furthermore, 13 out of 25 students achieved the KKM score, a substantial increase from only one student in the pretest. This study underscores the potential of audio podcasts as an engaging and accessible tool for language learning. By demonstrating their effectiveness in enhancing listening comprehension and student engagement, the research highlights the practicality of incorporating podcasts into language teaching as an alternative to traditional methods. These findings emphasize the urgency of integrating innovative tools like podcasts to make listening practice both enjoyable and impactful in modern language education.

Keywords: Audio Podcasts, Listening Skills, Language Learning, Student Engagement.

Introduction

Human communication takes the shape of language. Since humans are social creatures, they must communicate with one another in order to achieve their basic requirements (Bonvillain, 2019). As a result, living alone is impossible without social interaction. Language is a vital means of communication that allows us to express our thoughts, emotions, and ideas to others. It enables individuals to share knowledge, form relationships, and create social bonds that contribute to the development of societies. The ability to communicate effectively is not only crucial in everyday interactions but also plays a significant role in academic, professional, and cultural settings.

In the globalized world of today, English is absolutely necessary. English has emerged as the most widely spoken and studied language across the globe, serving as the primary medium of international communication. It is the dominant language in business, science, technology, education, and diplomacy, making it an essential skill for individuals seeking global opportunities. English proficiency is necessary in many occupations, particularly in multinational companies where employees from diverse linguistic backgrounds must collaborate effectively. Moreover, in the modern digital era, much of the information available on the internet is in English, further emphasizing its significance in accessing and exchanging knowledge.

English is also an essential tool for students, as it plays a crucial role in academic success. Many higher education institutions worldwide use English as the primary language of

instruction, requiring students to develop strong reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Furthermore, proficiency in English enhances critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, which are vital in both academic and professional environments. These considerations have made it necessary for people from all social classes, from the highest to the lowest, to be skilled in the English language (Bonvillain, 2019). Whether for career advancement, educational opportunities, or cross-cultural interactions, mastering English provides individuals with a competitive edge in today's interconnected world..

It is challenging to comprehend how people can collaborate and get along with one another without language. In the domains of education, research and technology, and other global undertakings, English is used as a communication medium (Kessler, 2013). As a key component of language learning, listening helps students grasp and interpret spoken language in real time, leading to deeper comprehension and more meaningful interactions. However, because native speech has cultural subtleties, different accents, and different speech rates, learning listening skills can be especially difficult for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students (Serraj & Noordin, 2013).

For ten years, of the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—listening has been referred to be the underutilized ability. Anderson proposed that listening comprehension issues are related to three stages of cognitive processing: expectations, parsing, and usage (Burns & Siegel, 2018). Second, Goh (2000) found that during the parsing stage, listeners have trouble remembering what they have heard, cannot mentally represent the words they have heard, and may have trouble understanding later feedback parts. Third, they are unsure of the primary concepts in the message and comprehend the phrases but not the intended message at the use stage.

According to Kavaliauskienė (2008), listening skills in language teaching have been neglected and shifted to a secondary position after speaking and writing. This is a surprising fact given that it is the skill that is most often used in communication. It is thought that about forty percent of our daily communication is spent on listening, thirty-five percent on speaking, sixteen percent on reading, and only nine percent on writing. Yet, in spite of its critical role in communication and language acquisition, listening comprehension remains one of the least understood processes in language learning. By now language practitioners have accepted that listening skills have to be taught like any other language skills (Burns & Siegel, 2018).

Applying multimedia can be one way to solve the aforementioned issue because it has several benefits for enhancing students' listening skills (Jia & Hew, 2022). With multimedia, students can not only hear the sound but also take photographs. Additionally, a teacher can use multimedia to download native voices as teaching resources for listening instruction. The podcast program is one of the programs that can be used. By providing students with contextualized and real content, podcasts can enhance their listening comprehension skills and boost their knowledge since they allow students to share their podcasts (Efendi & Astutik, n.d.).

Moreover, multimedia facilitates a more engaging and interactive learning experience. By integrating videos, animations, and audio materials into listening exercises, students can develop a deeper understanding of pronunciation, intonation, and contextual meaning. This multimodal approach caters to different learning styles, ensuring that both visual and auditory learners can benefit from the materials provided. Additionally, using multimedia resources such as speech recognition tools, subtitles, and interactive quizzes can provide immediate feedback, allowing students to track their progress and identify areas for improvement.

Furthermore, digital platforms enable personalized learning experiences, where students can practice at their own pace and access a variety of content tailored to their proficiency level. Online learning platforms, such as YouTube, TED Talks, and language learning applications, offer

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diverse listening exercises that expose students to different accents, speech patterns, and real-world conversations. These tools help bridge the gap between classroom instruction and authentic communication, making students more confident and capable listeners.

By integrating multimedia into listening instruction, educators can create an immersive and dynamic learning environment that fosters student engagement and motivation. The accessibility of digital resources also ensures that students can practice listening outside the classroom, reinforcing their skills through self-directed learning. Ultimately, the incorporation of multimedia into language education represents a modern and effective approach to developing students' listening comprehension abilities, preparing them for real-world communication in an increasingly digitalized world.

Through the use of voice recordings, images, videos, and sound effects, podcasting enables educators to engage their students in ways that go beyond conventional assignments (Kenna, 2023). For instance, students can submit a recorded version of a science presentation, write and perform plays as a writing assignment, or produce a visual progress report for a project that is still in progress. According to Beare, podcasting is particularly engaging for English language learners since it gives them access to "authentic" listening sources on nearly any topic that would be of interest to them (King & Gura, 2008).

Although previous studies have recognized the potential of podcasts in language learning, research specifically focusing on their impact on listening skills among EFL students remains limited. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the effectiveness of podcasts as a tool for enhancing listening comprehension in English. Additionally, it seeks to evaluate the unique contributions of podcasts in overcoming the challenges faced by EFL learners. The research objectives are to assess the impact of podcasts on improving EFL students' listening skills, identify the specific features of podcasts that contribute to effective listening comprehension, and provide recommendations for integrating podcasts into EFL listening instruction to optimize learning outcomes.

Method

The approach that the researcher used in this research was a quantitative approach. According to Sugiyono, research data in a quantitative approach is in the form of numbers and analyzed using statistical methods. This research design applied pre-experimental research, where the researcher used a single group with pre-test and post-test assessments to measure the effectiveness of the intervention. By comparing the students' scores before and after the intervention, the researcher aimed to determine the impact of audio podcasts on improving English listening skills (Moss et al., 2019). The study was conducted in a controlled environment to minimize external influences and ensure that any observed changes in student performance were attributable to the intervention.

In collecting data for this study, the researcher used a structured and systematic quantitative approach (Rashid et al., 2021). The specification of the analysis remained focused on numerical data interpretation to maintain objectivity and reliability. The data collection process involved administering a pre-test to assess students' initial listening abilities, followed by a treatment phase where students engaged with audio podcasts as part of their learning activities. Finally, a post-test was conducted to evaluate the extent of improvement in students' listening skills.

To enhance the accuracy of the findings, the researcher ensured that the pre-test and post-test were designed with equivalent levels of difficulty and covered the same listening comprehension components (Moss et al., 2019). Additionally, statistical tools such as paired

sample t-tests or descriptive analysis were employed to measure the significance of differences in students' performance before and after the intervention. The results of these statistical tests provided empirical evidence on whether audio podcasts significantly contributed to the development of students' listening skills.

Furthermore, the study considered potential limitations such as student motivation, prior exposure to audio materials, and variations in individual learning styles. To address these challenges, the researcher monitored students' engagement levels throughout the treatment phase and provided structured guidance on how to maximize the benefits of using audio podcasts. Future studies could expand on this research by incorporating a larger sample size, implementing a control group for comparison, or integrating other multimedia elements to further enhance listening comprehension..

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study involved 25 students selected through purposive sampling. The sample consisted of students from a specific class, chosen based on their availability and suitability for the research objectives. This sampling technique ensured that the participants met the criteria necessary for testing the impact of audio podcasts on listening skills.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data were collected using a pretest-treatment-posttest framework. The pretest was conducted to evaluate the students' initial listening skills, followed by the intervention, where students were regularly exposed to audio podcasts specifically designed to enhance listening comprehension. These podcasts featured authentic English conversations, storytelling, and instructional dialogues to provide students with exposure to natural speech patterns, different accents, and real-world communication contexts. The intervention period lasted for several weeks, during which students engaged in structured listening exercises, note-taking activities, and comprehension quizzes to reinforce their understanding.

To ensure consistency in the intervention, students followed a guided listening schedule, where they were required to listen to a specific number of podcast episodes per week. Teachers provided additional support by discussing key vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension strategies before and after each listening session. Moreover, students were encouraged to engage in reflective discussions and written summaries to further enhance their ability to process and retain information from the audio materials.

After the intervention, a posttest was administered to measure any improvements in their listening skills. The posttest included a series of listening comprehension questions designed to assess students' ability to identify main ideas, recognize supporting details, infer meaning from context, and understand spoken English at a natural pace. The results from the pretest and posttest were then compared to determine the effectiveness of audio podcast exposure in improving students' listening proficiency.

Additionally, qualitative feedback was gathered through student surveys and informal interviews to gain insights into their learning experiences and perceptions of the intervention. This supplementary data provided a more holistic understanding of the impact of audio podcasts, highlighting students' levels of engagement, motivation, and confidence in listening comprehension. The findings from this study contribute to the growing body of research on digital learning tools, emphasizing the potential of audio-based resources in language education. Future research could explore the effectiveness of combining audio podcasts with other multimedia elements, such as video content or interactive exercises, to further enhance listening skill development.

The primary instrument used in this study was a set of listening comprehension tests for the pretest and posttest. These tests were adapted from standardized English listening

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proficiency materials to ensure relevance and reliability. Each test consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions designed to assess various aspects of listening skills, including understanding details, main ideas, and inferential meaning.

Validity and Reliability

The test instruments were validated through expert judgment involving two English language educators who reviewed the content and format to ensure alignment with the research objectives. Reliability was tested using a pilot study conducted on a group of 10 students outside the research sample. The results yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.85, indicating a high level of reliability for the test instruments.

Data Analysis and Prerequisite Tests

The data were analyzed using paired sample t-tests to determine the significance of the difference between pretest and posttest scores. Prior to the analysis, prerequisite tests were conducted, including normality and homogeneity tests. The normality test was carried out using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which showed that the data were normally distributed. The Levene's test for homogeneity indicated that the data had equal variances, meeting the requirements for t-test analysis. This detailed methodology ensured a robust framework for investigating the effects of audio podcasts on students' English listening skills and provided a reliable basis for analyzing the results.

Results

Pre-test and Post-test

In data analysis, the data were collected through pre-test and post-test. The data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to ensure accurate and reliable statistical computations. Descriptive statistics, including data mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage, were calculated to summarize and interpret the overall performance of students before and after the intervention. Furthermore, an independent and paired sample T-test was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in students' listening comprehension scores due to the implementation of audio podcasts.

To ensure the validity of the results, normality tests such as the Shapiro-Wilk test were performed to assess whether the data were normally distributed. If the data met the assumption of normality, parametric tests such as the paired sample T-test were applied; otherwise, non-parametric alternatives like the Wilcoxon signed-rank test were considered. Additionally, effect size calculations were included to measure the magnitude of the intervention's impact, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of audio podcasts in improving English listening skills.

Moreover, the researcher employed reliability testing to verify the consistency of the assessment tools used in the pre-test and post-test. Cronbach’s Alpha was utilized to assess the internal reliability of the test items, ensuring that the measurements accurately reflected students' listening comprehension skills. Data visualization techniques, such as bar charts and line graphs, were also employed to present the findings more clearly and illustrate trends in students' performance.

By integrating a robust statistical analysis approach, the study aimed to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of audio podcasts as a learning tool. The findings from the SPSS analysis were then interpreted in relation to existing literature, offering insights into how digital learning resources can enhance students' language acquisition. Future research could expand on these methods by incorporating longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of multimedia-assisted learning on listening comprehension.

1. Rating Scale Classification

Table 1. Pre-test Classification (Findings)

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1.	A	93-100	0	0%
2.	A-	84-92	0	0%
3.	B	75-83	1	4%
4.	B-	≤75	24	96%
	Total		25	100%

Tabel 2. Post- test Classification Score (Findings)

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1.	A	93-100	2	8%
2.	A-	84-92	5	20%
3.	B	75-83	5	20%
4.	B-	≤75	13	52%
	Total		25	100%

The pretest results revealed that 96% of students scored below 75, with only 1 student achieving a score between 75 and 83. In contrast, posttest results showed significant improvement, with 52% of students scoring below 75, and 13 students achieving scores above the KKM threshold

2. The students listening score in fluency

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre Test	51.76	24	21.541	4.397
	Post Test	63.63	24	25.179	5.140

The mean score of the pretest was 51.76, with a standard deviation of 21.541. After the treatment, the mean posttest score increased to 63.63, with a standard deviation of 25.179. This significant increase indicates that audio podcasts had a positive effect on students' listening fluency.

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3. The students listening score in accuracy

		Paired Differences						ig. (2-
			Std.	Std.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
					Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	Pre Test - Post Test	-11.863	14.717	3.004	-18.077	-5.648	23	.001

The table shows that the value is lower than the level is significance (0.005). So it can be concluded that listened audio-podcast media effected to the listening skill students. The purpose of the study was to find out how to improve students' listening skills by making audio podcasts more interesting. Because she aimed to enhance their listening skills, the researcher used audio-podcasts as the medium. Furthermore, the pretest results showed that the students' listening abilities were weak, nearly all of them were perplexed by what they had heard, and they spent a long time to think about the speaker's correct responses. This proposition confirmed by the score of student's pretests. There was 1 student among 25 pupils that reached KKM score. The pupils' average score at that time was 51.76.

Following the pretest, the pupils received treatment from the researcher. Students truly enjoyed listening to the audio podcast during the course of the treatment, and it also gave them motivation because it allowed them to comprehend and react quickly to the material because listening to the audio did not make them feel bored or drowsy. Because it made pupils feel more at ease and content, it also affected their passion for learning English. The degree of the student's improvement after treatment was demonstrated by the post-test. Following the treatment, students' scores significantly improved on the post-test. Thirteen out of twenty-five pupils achieved the KKM score. Additionally, we can see from the students' post-test mean score of 63.63.

Discussion

According to the study's findings, students' listening skills can be enhanced by using audio podcasts. Podcasts can aid students in improving their listening skills while studying English, claims Trianty R (Syahabuddin & Rizqa, 2021). After receiving audio-podcast teaching in listening, the students in the experimental class seemed to value listening to English conversations and discussions more (Ikrima, 2023). They found it easy to listen to and were able to hear English being spoken in a range of circumstances through audio-podcasts. Thus, using audio-podcasts has a positive effect since it made listening easier, more comfortable, and more pleasurable for students learning English (Mohammed & Khadawardi, 2024).

The pretest results indicated that students' listening skills were weak, as nearly all participants scored below the KKM threshold. Most students struggled to understand spoken content, took longer to process information, and were unable to respond accurately. This is

evidenced by the mean pretest score of 51.76, with only one student achieving the KKM score. Following the pretest, students underwent treatment using audio podcasts. The podcasts offered engaging content that kept students motivated and reduced feelings of boredom or fatigue during the learning process. The use of audio podcasts not only enhanced students' listening comprehension but also improved their confidence and enthusiasm for learning English.

The posttest results demonstrated a significant improvement in listening skills, with the mean score increasing to 63.63. Thirteen out of twenty-five students achieved the KKM score, a notable improvement compared to only one student in the pretest. This finding highlights the effectiveness of audio podcasts as a medium for teaching listening skills, making the learning process more interactive and enjoyable. The study's findings emphasize the potential of audio podcasts to address challenges in listening comprehension and suggest that incorporating such tools into language instruction can enhance students' overall learning experience

Based on the above-mentioned related research findings, the researcher concludes that using audio podcasts to teach listening can encourage student engagement and interest in learning English (Sanjana, 2014). Additionally, learners enjoy listening to audio podcasts as learning resources; they are happy, enthused, not bored, and drawn to the speaker. Additionally, learners are able to comprehend and retain language from audio-podcasts. Additionally, this media makes it easy for students to try all levels of audio-podcasts, which makes it easier for teachers and students to use podcasts as a learning tool in the classroom (McCandless & Stephan-Robinson, 2014).

According Vilmante that Listening can instructional materials that would improve the student's interest and facilitate their learning. At the beginning, some of the students still did not know about Audio-Podcast. By doing regular training, the researcher attempted to implement new media to assist students in developing through a challenging procedure. The foundation of effective communication is listening, which is a crucial skill. The capacity to learn and adjust to new information, knowledge, and abilities is enhanced by the ability to listen (Fenuku, 2024).

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that using audio podcasts as a teaching tool significantly improved students' listening skills in English. Fundamental Finding: The research revealed that the students' listening abilities enhanced after exposure to audio podcasts, as evidenced by the substantial increase in their post-test scores, with more students achieving the KKM score compared to the pretest. Implication: This suggests that incorporating audio podcasts in language learning can effectively engage students, making the process of learning more enjoyable and less monotonous, thus promoting better comprehension and retention of English. Limitation: However, the study's scope was limited to a small sample size (25 students), which may not fully represent a broader population. Furthermore, the study focused solely on listening skills and did not explore the potential effects on other language skills. Future Research: Future studies could expand the sample size, explore the impact of audio podcasts on other aspects of language acquisition such as speaking and vocabulary, and investigate the long-term effectiveness of this method in diverse educational contexts.

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